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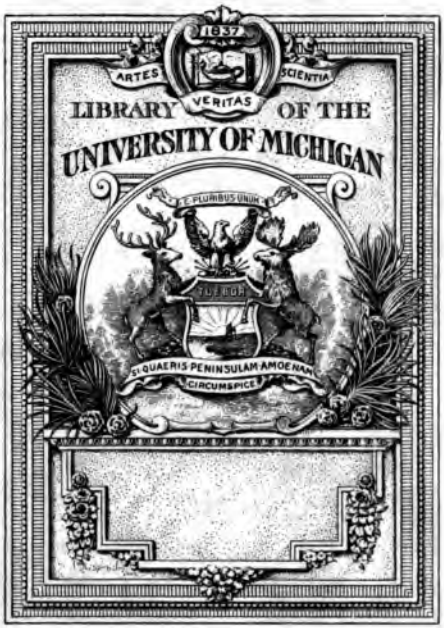
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REFLECTIONS

UPON THE

STATE AND CONDUCT

OF

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

11974

AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE YEAR

1809.

BY AN ENGLISHMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL.

——— Cuncti se scire fatentur,
Quid fortuna ferat populi; sed dicere mussant.
VIRGIL.

London:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL & W. DAVIES, STRAND.

1809.

G. SIDNEY, Printer,
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REFLECTIONS,

&c. &c.

If a bold and vigilant spirit of inquiry, conducting its researches with temper, and adhering strictly to justice, be, *at all times*, exercised with advantage, upon matters connected with the public welfare, it must be employed with peculiar propriety in *difficult and perilous conjunctures*. At a crisis teeming with great events, the public mind cannot be fixed too steadfastly upon the principles which appear to guide the conduct of their governors, and upon the measures which they actually pursue. If the situation of affairs be such as to produce a demand upon the energies and resources of the whole people, it is essential that those, who are to call them forth, be the friends of civil and religious liberty, disposed to conciliate the various classes of the com-

munity; and, at the same time, economical and disinterested in the management of the treasures drawn from the subject. By these means alone can a spirit of independence be fostered, which will present an effectual barrier to the encroachments of foreign tyranny.— By these means alone can that union be cemented among the various descriptions of men in the state, without which all their spirit must evaporate into feeble menace; and then only can the nation be induced to submit, with cheerfulness, to the necessary sacrifices of their property, when they are assured that their rulers themselves feel for the misery, and even the inconvenience, which is produced by heavy and increasing taxation.

In the measures pursued at a time of general danger, the people, who are menaced, must surely require something like judgment, in the design, as well as firmness and intrepidity, in the execution:— that the plan of operations have a tendency to counteract the danger in that quarter, where it assumes its most formidable aspect;— that it be promptly carried into effect; and that there be no glaring appearance of vacillation, still less of counteraction, in the pursuance of any great object:— They must surely require, that

there be no parade of bustle, without any effective enterprize.

Whether these reasonable expectations have, or have not, been fulfilled, in the system which has generally been pursued by the English government, and especially by those who now preside at the helm of state, it is the purpose of the following pages to inquire.—And, surely, I may entreat the serious and candid attention of my countrymen to subjects, which will shortly force themselves, uncalled, upon their consideration; even if they refrain, at the present moment, to open their eyes to the dangers which, on every side, surround them. Whether my view of the principles and measures which have characterized too many of our statesmen, since the commencement of the French revolution, be correct, or not, it is not my province to determine; but, even if my arguments be false, and my views erroneous, still it is essential that the minds of the people should be fixed upon the conduct of public affairs.—When a leak is sprung in a ship, the most careless passenger is interested in its fate, and anxiously inquires into the means which are adopted for its preservation.—The meanest individual on board lends a hand to assist at the pump; and should any of the persons in

command betray symptoms of ignorance, or cowardice, he would, by the common voice, be displaced from the station for which he had shewn himself utterly incapable. The vessel of our state is, I fear, in manifest danger; and I express my apprehensions, not for the sake of encouraging despondency, (God forbid!) but for the sake of inciting exertion;—that the people may, in time, have their eyes opened to a sense of their alarming situation, and may, in time, pursue such measures as may tend to avert the impending misfortunes. For this purpose, I conceive that no subject of inquiry is more rational, or more proper, than the manner in which our public affairs are conducted, at the very moment in which our independence, and even existence, as a nation, are endangered by a confederacy, more formidable than any which is recorded in the history of any age or country. Under these circumstances, to conceive ourselves *any way* secure, might be considered as an idea, savouring of presumption; but to conceive ourselves secure, while we are pursuing the very system which has accumulated against us this powerful and dangerous combination, appears to me, I own, somewhat bordering upon insanity. Let me hope that I am availing myself of a lucid interval, before the meet-

ing of Parliament, in which Englishmen may be brought to review, with calmness, but with the courage which becomes free men, the whole extent and probable causes of their present dangers. For myself, I will engage that no undue bias either has, or can, operate upon my mind, to the prejudice of any set of men whatsoever. I have no inducement to write but the wish of calling my countrymen to reflect, with becoming seriousness, upon their present situation.—But I must be allowed to say, if I have formed an erroneous estimate of the talents and principles of the present administration, it will be truly unfortunate for the Kingdom over which they preside. To me it appears that they have pursued a most questionable policy in almost every plan that has succeeded; and as generally failed, where the object was laudable. And this view of things is so far consolatory, that it encourages hope from a change of men and of measures. But if the vigilance, and wisdom, and honesty of Ministers, have been counteracted by causes over which they had no control, and if no set of men can be found amongst us more sagacious in discerning the real interests of the nation, nor more capable of directing its resources with effect, who can contemplate, without dismay, the future destiny of his country?

That the United Empire is placed in circumstances of unusual and aggravated danger, is, I fear, too obvious to be disputed for a single instant. The accumulated, and accumulating, power of France is avowedly bent upon our destruction. And when I mention France, my readers unfortunately know that it includes Holland, the Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland, a great part of Germany.—Russia co-operates in the hostile views of the French Emperor, with an ardour far more effective than when she formed a league against him.—Prussia (has it any longer existence as a state?) bows before her haughty conqueror—and even Austria submissively receives his mandate to renounce all friendly intercourse with England.

Denmark, incensed by our attack upon her national independence, vows implacable vengeance against us; and the effects of her hostility have already been severely injurious to our commerce. As to America—America, whose good will it was our true policy to have cherished by the most marked and uniform testimonies of respect and of friendship, America has resolved upon a state of interdicted intercourse, of defensive hostility; instead of the most active and the most profitable commerce;—I will not say, instead of the most cordial friendship, because the generality of our public

men have been too much disposed to regard her with jealousy, and to treat her with overbearing and unwarranted hauteur.

If we look around us for resources against this formidable array of active and of passive hostility, is the prospect such as to gladden any friend to his country with even a glimmering of consolation? Whence is the hope to arise? Is it from the warlike court of Sardinia? or the liberal policy of Sicily? Is it from the truly gallant, but unfortunate, King of Sweden, who cannot defend his own dominions from the aggressions of Russia; and who must be swallowed up in the vortex, which has ingulphed the rest of the continent, so soon as the Emperor of France shall have leisure to turn his attention to the North? Are our hopes centered in the Portuguese, who, instead of joining their arms with ours, for the assistance of their heroic neighbours, employ ten thousand British troops to awe them into gratitude for a deliverance from the Duc d'Abrantes? Is it, in fine, from Spain, that our consolation is to arise? Brave, but unhappy, nation!—Oh! that your noble struggles may be crowned with success! Then will your glory not only equal, but far outstrip the glory of your forefathers; for your enemy is even more subtle and enterprising than Hannibal, more powerful and fero-

cious than the Romans. Never did a nobler cause excite a gallant nation to arms! Never was a nobler cause more valorously sustained!—But a dark and dreary cloud envelopes the destinies of Europe,—of the world! And much I fear that even your united patriotism, your undaunted courage, will but, at length, swell the melancholy list of independent nations annihilated by Buonaparté. Yet,—if it *so* please an inscrutable Providence,—yet will you live in the memory of the latest ages, till the sound of liberty, and of national independence, shall vibrate, in vain, upon the ears of any human being!—Then, and not till then, will the memorial of your exemplary patience, your unappalled courage, your genuine patriotism, sink into oblivion!—Then, and not till then, will the name of your treacherous oppressor, your inexorable destroyer, cease to be execrated!

But if the gallant Spaniard excites more fear for his own existence, than he encourages hope for any support he may lend, are we to extend our views to the Bosporus and the Euxine, and cherish the imagination, that a friend and ally may yet be found in the *Sublime Porte?* There is something so irresistibly ludicrous in the eagerness with which the rumour of a treaty at Constantinople is announced, and in the panegyrics which are bestowed upon the *vigour* of

Mustapha Bairactar, that if the subject were not so awfully serious, it would be impossible to restrain a disposition to laugh.—What! Almost all Europe leagued in fierce hostility against the British Islands,— the resources of nearly the whole civilized part of the globe wielded against the United Kingdom by the most subtle politician, the most able and active general,—America casts a scornful or sullen glance upon the contest,—and *England*, amidst this

——— " War of elements,
" This wreck of matter, and this crash of worlds,"

turns an anxious and impatient look to the most distant corner of Europe, for a prospect of returning peace with the Monarch of Constantinople! With him, whose crown sits trembling on his own head, and whose hostility or friendship, within the last century, has been almost a subject of indifference to all the powers of Europe! When I see this eager glance, thus tremblingly directed towards the friendship of a Mahometan power, at the north-eastern extremity of Europe, and remark, at the same time, such a settled disinclination to stretch forth " the right hand of fellowship" to our fellow-subjects, the Catholics of Ireland, I cannot but call to mind the remark of Count

Oxenstiern,* and lament that such a singular exemplification of its truth should exist in a Cabinet, by whose decisions the destiny of the British Empire may be irrevocably fixed!

Where, then, are the people of the British Empire to turn their eyes for consolation amidst present difficulties, for assurance against future dangers?—Upon the enlarged views, sagacious policy, the prompt decision, the sound judgment, and unshaken firmness and patriotic spirit of the present Ministers?—Their entrance upon office was, indeed, hailed by some as an auspicious event, which would restore the tarnished lustre of British arms, and give unwonted energy to British councils. They were the men, who were to hurl back, with redoubled vengeance, the insulting menaces of the conqueror of the continent! They were the men, whose vigour was to appal, and whose sagacity was to disconcert, the united efforts of the Prince of Benevento, and the Emperor of France! of Talleyrand and Buonaparté!—How has the expectation of the British Empire, or rather the boast of the adherents of a system which has too long prevailed among us, how has it been fulfilled?

* "You see, my son, with how little common sense the world is governed!"

For the *vigour* which is shewn in promoting the gains of Victuallers and Contractors, and for the success which may be obtained in the attack of an ally, who, in the midst of a profound peace, was unprepared for any hostile movement, (at least against England*) the present rulers of this nation deserve the highest credit.—But what other praise can result from the expedition against Denmark, I confess myself, for one, unable to determine.—We have gained a certain number of ships, by an expedient, which is said to be justified by the *possibility* that, at some period or other, they might have been employed against us. It is surely difficult to discover, how far this species of reasoning will not extend; and to me, who am an Englishman of the Old School, it appears more calculated for the latitude of Bow Street, than for that of St. James's.—No reasoning, that I have yet seen or heard upon the subject, has yet shaken my original opinion, that it would have been

* The only preparation made by the Danes was actually *in our favour*. Their troops were withdrawn from Zealand into Holstein, to prevent the inroad of a French army. This measure, if my memory fail me not, was adopted upon the representation of the British government. I am persuaded that no treachery was intended; but the expedition is thereby placed in a more odious point of view.

better to wait for a period of war before we had commenced hostilities; and if the same ships had then been brought into port, after a day, like that at Aboukir, or Trafalgar, an Englishman might have justly regarded them as trophies to the fair fame of his gallant countrymen.

But let this pass;—the consequence of this famous expedition has been to inflame a brave and maritime nation with a most violent and universal spirit of hostility against us.—It has thrown the Emperor of Russia more decidedly into the arms of the French Monarch; it has furnished a pretext for the Emperor of Austria to withdraw from us his friendly countenance. It has supplied another, and a fruitful, theme to the invectives of Buonaparté, who delights to represent us as a tyrannical, tricking, and mercenary nation;—and, what is far worse, I am afraid it has inspirited his ruffian attempts against the independence of the Spanish nation. I am, indeed, far from representing these two actions as stained with the same deep dye; but, in so far as they set up the plea of expediency in opposition to the eternal and unalterable rules of justice, they partake so far of the same odious principle.—And, when Britain departs, in ever so slight a degree, from that path of honour and equity, which formerly so much distinguished her pro-

ceedings, we may be assured that our continental foe will readily avail himself of the precedent, and render it far more advantageous to *his* views of policy, than the utmost success of any such measure can be to *ours*.

The policy, therefore, as well as justice, of this capital feature in the schemes of the present administration, are far from unquestionable.—But still it was successful; and success, in many minds, will make amends for the absence of many other ingredients, necessary, according to the rules of *old morality*, to the *fitness* and *propriety* of an action. As, however, the expedition had all the advantage of preparation against (not an enemy, but) a friend, who was, of course, wholly unprepared, an administration that made so much boast of its vigour, would not pride itself much upon this.—This was a mere flourish before a full chorus—a slight skirmish at the opening of a campaign. Immediately other troops were put in motion. Expectation was awakened: for a gallant little army, under the command of one of our ablest generals, was on its way from Sicily. Expectation was now busy; but, in no long time, was somewhat disconcerted, on finding that the armament had anchored quietly in the bay of Gibraltar. Some excellent reason

was soon alleged in favour of the bay of Gibraltar, as a place of rendezvous, or a centre of attack. At length (Oh! shame to a vigorous Ministry) it was discovered, that, at Gibraltar, their arrival occasioned as much surprise as if they had been so many inhabitants transplanted from the moon. Orders for them, at Gibraltar, undoubtedly there were none; and, as their coming was wholly unexpected, provisions, likewise, there were none. And so this armament, without the slightest apparent cause for its change of situation, proceeded on its way to England. Now, it is remarkable that, soon after the arrival of the troops, under Sir John Moore, in England from Sicily, nearly the same number were forthwith ordered from England to Sicily, under Sir John Stuart. But for what purpose this immense expence was incurred, an expence of transporting, and provisioning, 9 or 10,000 troops from the Mediterranean to the British Channel, and from the British Channel back again, to say nothing of the hazard of a voyage, unnecessarily undertaken, still remains as occult a mystery as any in the art of transmuting metals. Conjecture itself was certainly at a loss upon this occasion; some thought it very convenient for furnishing the contractors with employment; some that it was an eligible mode of getting rid of a commander, whom his superiors knew not otherwise how to

displace. Others, again, marvelled at the vigour and ability of Ministers, who had made so much noise, and spent so much money, while their predecessors (poor, pitiful fellows!) had not been prodigal of their expeditions, merely for the purpose of indulging this, or that, favourite interest, or of gaining a false credit by the pomp and strut of energy, and by the empty menace of hostility.— Because the circumstances of the war and the season of the campaign did not present an object, in which British troops were likely to be employed with effect, *they* rather chose to spare the treasure of the nation, (to say nothing about the *lives of our gallant countrymen*) than to fling it away, without any one end in view, upon the hire of transports, the wear and tear of shipping, and the useless consumption of stores!

It must not, however, be imagined, that so energetic and high-spirited a Ministry should allow those troops of Sir John Moore to be idle, or the transport-contractors to be left without employment. — Go they must, somewhere.—And, doubtless, the necessity of their going was determined long before any place of destination was fixed. What acts of delinquency this unfortunate body of troops

had committed, that they should be condemned to endless wandering, I have never understood. —But go they must, somewhere; and whether each member of the Cabinet drew lots, or adopted any other appeal to chance, by way of determining the place to which they should go, no mortal but themselves can determine.— Off they were again sent, and the expedition anchored before Gottenburgh. Here was a theme of triumph to the parasites who feed upon loans, and the mock patriots who batten upon pensions and upon contracts! Here was a source of panegyric upon the martial spirit and generous views of a Ministry, who disdained to desert the only ally that still joined in cordial, and in active, resentment against the Corsican!—already were the Russian troops retiring before the united Swedes and English; —already were the Danes expelled from their continental territory by the irresistible co-operation of two such redoubtable allies. All this, aye, more than this, had the imagination of the lovers of a vigorous Ministry conjured up, when the brightness of the vision was a little obscured by intelligence, that the armament was lying inactive in Gottenburgh Roads.

To pursue this ludicrous system of active

inactivity, of mischievous folly, in detail, would be as disgusting to the reader as painful to the writer. It is necessary only to state, that, when this armament arrived in Sweden, no arrangement had been previously made respecting the part that it was to take in the operations of the campaign. The King of Sweden proposed an expedition, in which our brave and admirable commander conceived it was contrary to his instructions to join. While an officer was dispatched to England for orders, the King actually placed Sir John Moore under arrest, from which he, at length, made his escape.—He was thus compelled to join his troops under circumstances, in which we will undertake to say, no commander in chief of an armament, destined to support the cause of an ally, ever was placed before; and then the expedition, which had traversed such a waste of waters, returned to England, not a man having been disembarked. After a due measure of delay, they were sent to Portugal, where they arrived just in time *not* to be present at the battle of Vimeira; and, after another delay in Portugal, they commenced their march into Spain, where they also arrived, not to participate in the glory of a battle, but to incur the disgrace of a retreat.

After this enumeration, surely no comment is required in order to elucidate the talent of our administration, for grand conception in the project of an enterprize, and for celerity in carrying it into effect. If the mere narrative of the course pursued, and the service performed, by a body of our best troops, under one of our best generals, during the space of about eighteen months, does not completely satisfy every rational and honest man, as to the risque of our public interests, when committed to such management, in opposition to the genius and activity of Buonaparté, all reasoning upon the subject must be superfluous, and the state of our unfortunate country may, indeed, be most deeply lamented, but it cannot be materially improved.

To this specimen of consummate ability in the superintendence and direction of military operations, it may seem unnecessary to add, that the expedition under Sir Arthur Wellesley remained near two months in harbour. It then sailed not only without a defined object, but with a very small proportion of cavalry,* and

* "Early in the month of May, 1808, a very considerable force, destined for foreign service, was assembled near Cork." "On the twelfth of July, Lieutenant-General Sir

with horses, *confessedly bad*, for the artillery, and also most inadequately provided with the means for subsisting an army; to which, chiefly, it must be attributed, that the battle of Vimeira was not followed up by the total defeat

" Arthur Wellesley sailed from Cork." " He advanced by the " coast-road towards Lisbon, for the substantial reason among " others, of preserving his communication with the shipping, " *from which alone he could derive his bread.*" " The army " marched from Mondego, having horses, *although indif-* " *ferent,* for eighteen pieces of cannon. The cavalry, about " four hundred, *including* two hundred Portuguese."

" On detailing the many difficulties to be encountered, " such as the impossibility of leaving his victuallers and the " stores for any considerable distance, the inferior number " of his cavalry, and the state of his artillery and carriage- " horses and mules, &c. Sir Harry Burrard, &c. decided."

" Our patroles gave intelligence of the movements of the " enemy; but, being inferior in cavalry, they could go to no " distance, and their reports were vague."

Report of the Board of Inquiry.

Notwithstanding this report is couched in terms so favourable to all the parties implicated, ministers, as well as officers, what a history does it present of our capacity for foreign expeditions? The whole deserves to be again and again perused: and the wondering reader may, perhaps, ask himself, Was it for this the Corporation of London experienced such a severe rebuke?

and surrender of Junot's army.* What our troops were employed about, in Portugal, after the too-memorable Convention of Cintra, till the rainy and sickly season set in, and the roads were almost impassable, Ministers alone can explain, even if it be in their power to unravel such a mystery. But it must not be forgotten, that, instead of growing wise by experience, Sir David Baird's expedition was detained at Falmouth, precisely in the same manner, and for nearly the same time that Sir Arthur Wellesley's had continued in the Cove of Cork. When the forces under Sir David Baird, after so long sounding "the note of preparation," at length reached the coast of Spain, the Supreme Junta had not been officially made acquainted with their intended destination.—Hence, a further delay of some days took place, at a most critical conjuncture, before our troops could be permitted to disembark.

Now, in this case, where even a week's delay may have been productive of the most fatal consequences, it cannot be pretended, any more than in the case of the armament which sailed to Sweden, that there was no time to apprize our allies of their destination and object.

* See the Report above cited, *passim*.

In the multitude of arrangements connected with state affairs, and more particularly in the complicated events of war, much may, undoubtedly, be placed to the account of fortune. But so glaring is the improvidence displayed by those, to whom our lives, fortunes, civil and religious rights, are entrusted, that their blunders have nothing dubious about them. So contrary are all the steps which they have taken to every principle, by which the success of human projects is in general determined, that even chance, which bears so large a share in the blame of other failures, here finds a complete exculpation. Ample time was given for deliberation at home, and for sending instructions abroad; the sea was completely open; we had cavalry and artillery; both in the finest order, and in very considerable force.—We had also three or four of the finest months for crossing that little space of ocean, which lies between us and the present seat of war. Yet, of all these opportunities no advantage whatsoever has been taken; although, so far as certainty is attainable in the execution of any human plan, every calculation might have been in our favour, and the result put almost beyond the reach of contingency.

There is, however, something so whim-

sically perverse in the whole direction of the Spanish campaign, that it is impossible to pass it over in silence; although a recapitulation of all the errors which it involves, and all the mischiefs which it has produced, would supply ample materials for a volume.

The spirit of outraged patriotism burst into a flame at Madrid on the second day of May, 1808, and it spread through the most distant parts of the country with a rapidity and universality, of which, perhaps, even the history of modern revolutions does not present a more striking instance

In the month of June, a formal deputation, from one of the provinces, was sent to our Ministry, soliciting succours; and when, no long time after, the French fleet was compelled to surrender to the Spanish at Cadiz, it surely cannot be pretended that our Ministry could doubt concerning the character of the events passing in Spain. If they had not been destitute of every statesmanlike quality, it must have occurred to them, that this was by far the most favourable conjuncture that had yet been presented for checking the too formidable power of our determined enemy: —At the same time it was manifest, to the

most careless observer, that every hope of success depended upon the promptitude, with which advantage was taken of this auspicious event.

Buonaparté had been surprised, for the first time in his political career, in a situation for which he was unprepared. He had assured himself of an easy conquest; and had taken no precautionary measures, in case of a discomfiture.—His forces were stationed on the Danube and on the Vistula, amidst nations, some of whom were hardly reconciled to his sway, while others watched for an opportunity in which they might recover some of their lost rights, and take vengeance for their wounded pride.

Had the events in Spain been improved as they ought to have been, and as they would have been by the immortal Chatham, at the head of an English Ministry, sagaciously viewing the probable course of events, feeling earnestly for the real honour and interests of their country, and wielding its resources with the *reality*, not the *shew*, of vigour, little doubt can be entertained but the Emperor of Austria would have gladly seized the occasion for retrieving his injured credit, and regaining possession of his lost dominions. Alexander, too,

whose sense of dignity seems mightily subservient to the confidence he possesses in his own strength, would not then have been so tame an auxiliary in all the measures which his *imperial* brother *now* so *imperiously* dictates.—Italy might then have shewn that, although degenerate, she was not absolutely, and for ever, sunk into coward subjection: she might have had occasion to convince the world, that her antient race of warriors and of patriots was not utterly extinct. In every place, *where the yoke of France was not felt more tolerable than the oppressions of the old governments*, the genuine spirit of freedom might have found asserters of her holy and unalienable rights. But in what manner was the British government to avail itself of this seasonable and unexpected turn of affairs, in order to bring about these important and desirable results? Why, by co-operating with Spain to drive the invaders from the country; to rid the land of its destroyers; and to assist in planting the banners of national independence upon the summits of the Pyrenees.

After the surrender of Dupont, there were left about 40,000 Frenchmen upon the frontiers;—of Frenchmen, half ashamed of their cause, as well as mortified and dispirited by their repulses at Saragossa, and their defeat at Baylen. Say that they were more than 40,000;

say that they were, in some measure, reinforced by such detachments as Buonaparté could spare to their assistance. Certain it is that, for three months, at least, Blake held this army in check; that they dared not to attack him; and that the only cause which prevented him from attacking them was, the want of cavalry and artillery. We have heard much about the desire expressed by the Spanish nation, that we would not send them infantry. It is possible that, with a modest and generous forbearance, they did not ask for any thing which they hoped to be able to supply themselves; but it is certain that, when Sir A. Wellesley was going to Portugal, Sir Thomas Dyer wrote, in the name of the Junta of Asturias, to intreat that he would land his forces in the north of Spain, and co-operate with the patriots in the reduction of the French upon the Ebro. It has been said, that women are never at a loss for an excuse;* and I suppose, that a feeble and unsuccessful Ministry will never find themselves without a reason,—convincing to those

* "Now, by my mother's soul it is decreed,
She shall not want an answer at her need.
For her, and for her daughters, I'll engage,
And all the sex in each succeeding age;
Art shall be theirs to varnish an offence,
And fortify their crimes with confidence."

POPE'S JANUARY AND MAY.

at least, who can never discern the *long ears* of a Midas, while he possesses the dazzling faculty of converting every thing he touches into *gold.* I believe, however, that it would be extremely difficult, for even their best-paid panegyrists to convince an impartial mind, that the Spaniards would not have been glad of *any efficient* succours we would send them, although *cavalry* and *artillery* were by far the most desirable.

Granting, however, as entirely as the friends of Ministry can wish, that the Spaniards refused all succours of infantry, while they earnestly implored the aid of cavalry and artillery; it remains a most heavy responsibility upon Ministers to shew, why cavalry and artillery*

* In what manner one species of force was deprecated, or the other requested, it is impossible for those who have no access to ministerial sources of information to ascertain. It has, however, never been denied, that the Spaniards stated their wants to be, money and arms,—cavalry and artillery; and, if I am not misinformed, one of the most gallant generals in Spain, very pointedly expressed his astonishment that the English government should *withold* cavalry at the season when it *could act,* and *send* it when it *could not*; when the mountains were covered with snow, and the vallies filled with water. As to artillery, I apprehend the want was felt of skill in men and officers, and in that species of field artillery which the English have so greatly improved. I mention this to avoid cavil about the terms of the demand; for, as there are some celebrated foundries of cannon in Spain, it might be pre-

were not sent; and, in short, why no British troops were at the scene of action before the expiration of the year.

It is clear that, on the frontiers of Spain, the battle, not only of Spain, but of England, of Europe, of the civilized world, was to be fought against the almost irresistible power and insatiable ambition of Buonaparté. As Blake and Ney, with the forces they respectively possessed, evidently kept each other in check; and as Blake was enabled to make such an heroic stand against the French, in the month of November, when it was certain that the latter had received reinforcements infinitely more numerous, and more effective, than the Spanish General, what might not have been expected, if a body of British troops, well

tended the Spaniards were in no want of field-pieces. After all, I suppose cavalry was the main article of which they stood in need; and when so many of the best-appointed and best-disciplined regiments of cavalry were passing an idle summer in England and Ireland, what excuse can ministers allege for a neglect fraught with such fatal consequences? As to arms, also, it will be a very proper subject of inquiry, in what quantities, and at what times, they have been sent; and moreover, how they were disposed of. The *French Bulletins*, indeed, state, that they have, every where, found arms of English manufacture,— *Sed non ego credulus illis*. I suppose ministers will hardly appeal to such evidence in their favour; and it has been said that, in some parts of Spain, the South-East for instance, the inhabitants have been greatly in want of arms.

appointed with cavalry and artillery, had been landed in the North of Spain, near the scene of action, in the months of July, August, or even September? Is there a man who believes that if an English army had been dispatched to Spain, during either of those months, so as to co-operate with the Patriot troops in the North, is there a man who doubts but the French must have been forced to evacuate the country, either in consequence of defeat, or by capitulation?

When I speak of an English army, I mean an English army, *properly appointed*, and *properly commanded*, consisting chiefly of that species of force of which the Spaniards were most destitute, which therefore they had most anxiously required; such an army as England is able to furnish, and such as an English Ministry ought to be wise and honest enough to send out. I certainly do not presume to assert, that if we sent out an army, with a Commander in Chief changed every day, or artillery without horses to draw it, or a commissariat who were utterly unacquainted with the means of supplying that army; or if we sent horse* with saddles so constructed as

* There is a species of regiments called Hussar regiments, dressed in all the frippery of foreign embellishments. When one of these regiments began its march from Portugal to Spain,

actually to incapacitate them from performing any march, or sustaining any fatigue;—I certainly cannot take upon myself to *assert* that such an army, combined with the Patriots, would have driven the enemy beyond the Pyrenees. Nevertheless, in such a favourable position of affairs, I am inclined to think that *almost any* British army, sent to that particular place, at that particular time, would have effected this most desirable object. Spain would then have been delivered—Austria emboldened—Russia recovered from her panic. Italy, especially when recently smarting under the affronts and the spoliation practised towards her spiritual head, would have resumed some of its former magnanimity. Denmark, seeing that the power of England was at length efficaciously employed in a noble cause, might have relaxed from some part of her resentment; and even the more peculiar subjects of Buonaparté, from their usual habit of confounding success with virtue, might have engaged with far less ardour in a cause so disastrous, and so unrighteous, as an attempt to destroy the hopes, and repress the energies, of a REGENERATE PEOPLE.

in a few days 120 horses were so much injured by the Hussar saddles, that they could not proceed. This was probably the case with other regiments; but surely this fact alone ought to cause some serious investigation.

Instead of prompt and energetic assistance, which would have led to this glorious and happy result, (glorious and happy to Europe, but, above all other nations, glorious and happy for England!) no cavalry whatsoever was sent to Spain, very little, if any, artillery. Even up to the present day, (Dec. 28) so far as we have intelligence, not an English soldier has been lifting his arm in aid of our gallant allies, except some few heroic individuals, whose high feeling of all that is great and glorious in man has urged them to lend their voluntary services to an high-spirited, and much-injured, nation.—So that, although the events, which for many months had been passing in Spain, might have admonished a sagacious statesman to prepare himself for some interesting and important crisis, although the revolution actually commenced on the second of May, although the nation was in arms in the course of the succeeding month, yet not only has no British army encountered the hosts of France, but not a single regiment, not even a troop or company, has hitherto stood in battle array, sustaining a cause which is not more the cause of Spain, than it is the cause of the United Kingdom.—Let us here, for a moment, turn our thoughts back to the period (it is not a considerable space of time for he exertions of memory, though

it is for the operations of armies) when the Spanish revolution first broke forth,—let us call to mind, what our own opinions and ideas were, connected with that event, and what was the language then heard on every side. Nothing is more useful than such a retrospect as this, if we would form a correct and comprehensive estimate of political causes and effects. In times portentous like these, the human mind anxiously looks forward to the *probable* course of events. Casting this eager glance upon things yet unaccomplished, ignorant of the result itself, and of the manner in which it will be produced, men indulge their honest feelings, and express their unbiassed sentiments, without any tincture of personal or party affection; whereas, when events have really taken place, they borrow a colour and complexion in our minds, from the persons who were instrumental to their good or ill success. If a design miscarries under the conduct of those whom we are secretly inclined to favour, we abate the glow of our preconceived hopes, we suppress the natural ardour of our feelings, we eagerly catch at every shadow of excuse, and, rather than not palliate the errors of our friends, we are even ready to accuse ourselves of indiscretion for entertaining such unfounded expectations. What, then, were the sentiments ex-

pressed universally throughout this kingdom, when the first dawn of Spanish liberty appeared? It was imagined that Buonaparté had prepared his measures completely for every possible emergency. The actual amount of his forces, both in Spain and Portugal, was considerably over-rated; and it was believed that he had legions ready to pour in upon the devoted nation, at the very first signal of resistance.—It was therefore apprehended that he would crush the unhappy nation at once. — But if that apprehension should not be realized, every heart beat high with expectation that the cause of liberty would triumph.—" Let him " but give them three months, to arm and " train the inhabitants, and for England to " throw in her succours, and the reign of the " oppressor will be at an end!" It was no more doubted that a British army would be landed upon the Peninsula, so soon as it could be got ready, than it was doubted that a British army would be found upon the British shores, if the enemy should be able to carry into effect his long-uttered threat of invasion. " If the " storm do not burst so as utterly to overwhelm " them in the outset, and if time be but given " to the Ministry to collect and transport over " an army, the die is cast against Buonaparté; " and to the present Ministry will be reserved

" the honour of driving him, with disgrace, " from Spain." Such were the general expectations, and more especially of those who clamoured loudly in behalf of the measures pursued by administration. Such, certainly, were the ideas upon which were founded the various *anticipating* addresses to the Sovereign, returning thanks for measures which *were to be taken* in behalf of a nation, whose fate had awakened the cordial and generous sympathy of every friend to the genuine principles of the British Constitution,—those principles which placed the Brunswick family upon the throne. What, then, did, *in fact*, turn out to be the real state of affairs? and to what causes is it owing, that these expectations have been so unfortunately disappointed? Is it owing to the formidable force which the Emperor of France was actually enabled, *at the time*, to collect against the undisciplined troops of Spain? Were the Spaniards themselves so destitute of energy, as to yield to the first impression of panic at the sight of an enemy? Did they allow no time to the British Ministry to prepare and dispatch the necessary succours? Or is the cause to be traced to the unaccountable delays, and fatal mismanagement, in the Cabinet of England? How stands the fact in reply to these serious and indispensable questions?—As to

Buonaparté, it was found that he was, for the first time in his life, wholly unprepared. His troops in Spain and Portugal did not amount to nearly the number that were supposed. The spirit of the Spaniards displayed itself in efforts corresponding with the great emergency. Success attended them in almost every instance, except at Rio Seco, where they were defeated, FROM WANT OF CAVALRY. The French fleet surrendered;—Dupont capitulated;—Saragossa sustained and repulsed a siege with heroism, surpassing deeds of ancient or modern fame. All this success exceeded, by far, the most sanguine hopes of the friends of freedom, who are, and have ever been, the most decided and intrepid opponents of the system pursued by Buonaparté.

Nevertheless, although every circumstance thus conspired that could be favourable to enterprise, not an English soldier marched into Spain till the month of November. Then, indeed, did an army pass the western frontier; but not till the Gallic Monarch, having at length collected his troops, had passed the Pyrenees, and defeated the patriots, who, in vain, placed themselves to oppose the torrent. And thus the British alliance, which ought to have supplied the means of resisting the attack more effectually,

or of preventing altogether the possibility of attack, appears to have produced no one effect to the Spanish nation; except it be increased vigour and rapidity of movement, on the part of the foe, in order that the insurgents, as he unwarrantably styles them, might be completely discomfited and dispersed before our arrival.

Let us now consider what possible plea can be urged by the partisans of Ministry for this strange and calamitous delay. In the first place, they sent troops to Portugal.—Why to Portugal? Junot had sufficient employment for his whole force in the refractory spirit of the Portuguese themselves; and the only movement, made by the French troops, even to succour Dupont, was counteracted by the force under General Spencer, who might still have continued at the same post, if his continuance there, after the surrender of Dupont, had been deemed advisable. It was then sufficiently clear, that Junot and his forces would not be able to throw any obstacle in the way of whatsoever effort should be made to drive the French across the Pyrenees. And, when this great measure had been accomplished, he would gladly have consented to quit Portugal, upon terms far less honourable to himself, far less

disgraceful to us, than those which he actually did obtain by the Convention of Cintra. But, upon the merits of this Portuguese expedition, it is quite unnecessary to dilate. Of the heroism of our troops at Vimeira, and of the merits of their commander, upon that occasion, it is impossible to speak in terms of exaggerated praise. Why that commander was superseded in the moment of victory; why his successor was superseded on the following day; why the French, when they had been defeated, were sent in English transports to a place, from which they were at liberty to act against our allies, the Spaniards; why the English army remained, after the Convention, so long inactive, that Buonaparté had passed the Bidassoa, and defeated a Spanish army, before our troops had well reached even Spanish ground; and why, above all, for the question cannot be too often repeated, why any British troops were sent to Portugal in the first instance, and not to Spain; —are inquiries which, we trust, the wisdom of Parliament will institute. And, unless a satisfactory reply be given to each of these inquiries, we are confident that a spirit of indignation will prevail throughout the British Empire. If any evasion be attempted, if any sophistical reasons be assigned, still more, if the pride and arrogance of office disdain to satisfy the just

expectations of the people, there is not an individual of feeling and honour amongst us, who will not be convinced that the reputation, and even safety, of his country have been compromised, her resources improvidently wasted, the health and the lives of her bravest defenders unprofitably exposed, and the interests of her best, her only allies, completely sacrificed by cold and protracted delay, by cumbrous and delusive assistance.

Much has of late been said, and much, I am aware, will be said, by the advocates of Administration, about the want of energy and of spirit among the Spaniards, which, it seems, they have lately discovered.—But why so lately discovered? If the spirit was not generally spread throughout, it was, in the last degree, rash and hazardous in Ministry, to encourage them in so desperate an enterprize, as that of opposing a feeble insurrection to a power that has laid Europe prostrate. Had they not, then, the means of ascertaining the real state of the public mind in Spain?—Are not many parts of that kingdom within two or three days sail of England;—and had not our Ministers power to send officers and agents over every part of the country, when they wanted to procure the necessary information?—Were they required to spare expence in the attainment of an object

so essentially necessary? I, therefore, maintain that, if they really were ignorant of the state of the public spirit in Spain till the month of November, that very circumstance argues a negligence or incapacity, which renders them utterly disqualified to exercise any public office. Either, therefore, they were ignorant, or they were not.—If they were, they stand convicted upon that ground.—If they were not ignorant, they judged favourably of it, from the very circumstance of sending an army, at whatsoever time they sent it: and the pretence of discovering a want of spirit, after our armies had entered the country, shews only that a shelter is sought from the just reproaches of all, who looked for the discomfiture of our great adversary, if a proper use had been made of the opportunity so unexpectedly afforded against him. The mere fact of the army marching into Spain, proves the opinion entertained by Ministers of the spirit of the country, after they had ample time, and every requisite convenience, for ascertaining it.— But when it was clearly seen that our armies had arrived too late, and that the French, although they had come from the farthest extremity of Europe, were carrying every thing before them, then the generous feelings of the British nation vented themselves in complaints against the tardy and defective arrangements of Admi-

nistration. Then it was, and not till then, that the fault was laid upon the want of energy and spirit of our allies, as if, although the accusation were true, it formed the slightest excuse for the lateness of the period when succours were sent. Supposing that Ministry had not possessed the due means for acquiring all the information they might wish, and yet had thought it necessary to support the Spanish arms against Buonaparté; surely it would have been right to have sent troops, when the enemy had retired to the frontiers, when the patriots were in possession of the sea-ports, and when, what is of the greatest importance, they were inspirited by success; when the season was not stormy, and when, if the British had not found themselves supported in the manner, and to the extent, they had expected, they might have re-embarked, as they had disembarked, without any risque either from the enemy or the elements. That would have been the time for feeling the pulse of the nation, when so much less hazard to our own troops and our own vessels, would have attended the trial, while so much more proportionable benefit would have accrued to our allies.— But, no!— our Ministers scorn to take advantage of an enemy; they disdain to be too generous, even to their allies; they have a noble disinterestedness,

which induces them to lose sight even of advantage to themselves; since no one can doubt that a well-concerted and well-conducted expedition must, and ought to be, in the highest degree, beneficial to the Ministry, under whose auspices it is planned and executed. They have a splendid ignorance, and noble contempt, of the real honour and interests of themselves, their country, and their country's allies; and, squabbling about some sordid and disgraceful object at home, or some useless or mischievous project abroad, they have completely thrown away the most glorious opportunity for redeeming the credit of Britain, and checking the gigantic designs and monstrous power of France, that has occurred since the first burst of the Revolutionary storm.

It is plain that a deficiency of public spirit in Spain, supposing it to exist, cannot, in the slightest degree, palliate the conduct of Ministry for the original mis-direction, and imperfect equipment, of the force which they did send out; nor for the wanton indiscretion, by which they permitted the legions of France, though drawn from the Vistula, to enter the territory and beat the armies of our allies, before Sir John Moore had quitted Portugal.—But upon what circumstances is this injurious

charge against our brave, but unfortunate, allies founded?—Why, upon the supposed indifference shewn by the inhabitants of the provinces, through which Sir J. Moore and Sir D. Baird marched; and the unaccommodating spirit manifested, in some instances, towards our troops? This, indeed, is a subject into which it is necessary to inquire, although it cannot be considered as any way extenuating the culpability attached to the *time* at which our armies commenced their march. If a want of cordiality was apparent, where a grateful and enthusiastic zeal might have been looked for, it is important to ascertain whether it can be traced to an insensibility, on the part of Spain, to the great cause in which it was engaged; or whether it has been produced by the mismanagement of those who lead the British Councils. Were the Spaniards deficient in spirit, when they compelled the fleet in Cadiz harbour to surrender, without the aid of England?—when they compelled Lefebvre to retire with such reiterated disgrace from before Saragossa?—Or, when they compelled Dupont to sign his capitulation? Suppose that a British force had been landed at a *time*, when their prowess might really have been attended with the most marked and desirable consequences; and in a *place*, where

they could have been immediately and effectually brought into action, without burthening their allies by the passage of a numerous body through a long tract of country, ill-provided with necessaries, even for the inhabitants.—Suppose them landed at Bilboa or St. Andero in August or September, do we imagine that the Spaniards would not then have received them with enthusiastic delight?—have welcomed them as benefactors?—have hailed them as the preservers of all that was dear and valuable to them, as men and as citizens? Would that the experiment had been fairly tried! we should not then have heard of coldness, or of a declining spirit!—But when, after the hopes excited of assistance to be given by a British force, no British force appeared, although the ports were open, the passage safe, and the enemy weak; and when, *unsupported by their only ally*, they were called upon to oppose the mighty force, which the Corsican, during the Summer and the Autumn, had been gathering together from every corner of Europe, is it a subject of wonder, or of reproach, that their confidence *then* began to give way to distrust, and hope to evaporate into despair?—When they heard of the operations pursued by the English in Portugal, they could not place much reliance upon permanent and efficacious aid; and they might

entertain some (no very unreasonable) suspicion of undue interference in matters of internal government.— "The English could fight well, "to be sure; but they would tamely surrender, "by treaty, the honours and advantages of a "hard-fought field. They had assisted the "Portuguese, it was true, in driving the "French from the country; but they had "claimed a privilege of dictating to the Por- "tuguese people, in points upon which no "foreign nation, especially one which assumed "the character of ally and protector, could "have any right to interfere. They esta- "blished over them governors, little less "odious than the masters, whom they had "taken so much pains to expel. And, after "all this, they had not appeared very soli- "citous to send the forces, which could have "been spared, to the assistance of Spain; for "Junot, and a great part of his troops, had "actually been landed* on the other side the

* The armistice in Portugal was signed on the twenty-second of August, and the convention concluded upon the thirty first of that month. Sir John Moore and Sir David Baird did not effect a junction till about the twentieth of December;—the former having been three weeks at Salamanca, and Sir David Baird as long at Villa Franca. General Junot, with 8,000 of his troops that had capitulated in Portugal, was at St. Sebastian on the tenth of December. I should be glad to

" Pyrenees, long before the English began " their march from Lisbon."

Such reflections as these were very likely to press upon the minds of the Spaniards, especially when their powerful and active enemy had already beaten their advanced armies.— Nor were the impressions likely to be weakened, when the first movement made by the English, after the defeat of Castanos, was retrograde; and when a period of many weeks, a period which called for the most active and instantaneous operations, was suffered to pass away, before the English Generals had even formed a junction. In the military knowledge and heroic spirit of these Generals, I have been accustomed to repose implicit confidence; and, I am persuaded that, however unfavourable may have been the construction put upon their inactivity, their conduct must have been prescribed by a necessity equally galling and imperious. But the greater the acknowledged merit of these commanders; the more perfect the discipline and the more resolute the valour of the troops, which they command; the more incumbent it

know in what manner the defenders of the expedition to Portugal, and the subsequent convention, will be able to confute this *damning* evidence of dates.

will be for Ministers to shew us why so much professional talent has been exposed to detraction; why such patience and courage in the soldiers has been so utterly unproductive of effect, that the year 1808 has proceeded to its close before the English army has been brought in sight of an enemy. Theirs it will be to shew why they must be brought to the encounter under circumstances the most adverse and inauspicious, in a season unfriendly to their health, and in roads impracticable to their march; when, if the preceding *five or six months* had been improved as they ought to have been, perhaps not a Frenchman would now have been found, except as a prisoner, on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees.

For the apparent want of cordiality, and for the decline of public spirit, so far as they now prevail among the Spaniards; for the unprosperous manner, and protracted period, at which the campaign must commence, (for it has not even yet commenced) on the part of England,—in fine, for the disastrous turn which has been given to the fortunes of Spain; for these calamitous events, and all the disastrous consequences which may be derived from them, the British Ministry, and they only, are responsible. They are responsible for this melancholy train of evils, from their unaccountable delay in dis-

patching any troops,—from the imperfect state of equipment in which they were at length dispatched,—and, above all, from the perverse destination of our armies, when they sent them to engage the French on the Ebro, by landing in Mondego Bay. Of all these calamities I cannot but consider the English Ministry as the authors; and if the Parliament and nation, when so strong a case is made out, will yield them their implicit confidence, and not institute a full and rigorous inquiry into every one of their proceedings, with mingled emotions of grief and of shame, of indignation and alarm, I must acknowledge my fear, that the last, best hopes of England are at an end!

Thus far have been considered the nature and effect of the military operations, as they have been conducted by land, under the direction of the present Ministry.—It is no less alarming to discover how inefficient they have contrived to render our naval superiority. In consequence of the failure of due supplies to the blockading squadron at Rochefort, the fleet of the enemy was enabled to sail from that port, to form a junction with a squadron at Toulon, and to scour distant seas, not only unmolested, but absolutely unseen, by any of our ships of war. By a similar perversion of the maritime strength

of the country, the *Bay of Bengal*, and even the *British Channel*, have been infested, in a most unprecedented manner, by the vessels of the enemy. Our trade has been unable to traverse the Baltic in security; and, from the immense number of ships, which adorn the lists of the British navy, only two could be found, in the hour of trial, to aid the Swedish fleet against the common foe. Those two indeed displayed, in an unequal conflict, the accustomed valour and skill of British seamen; but they were unable to prevent the escape of the enemy. And here, as in every case where the *effect* produced by our army and navy* has been mentioned as inadequate to the exigencies of the times, and the resources of the country, I trust I have expressed myself in terms too plain to admit of any perverse or malignant construction. Feeling as I do in common, I believe, with the whole world, the praise they so justly merit, my regret and indignation are excited, that their exertions are so frequently ill-

* I am in candour bound to point out the deliverance of the gallant Romana, and his companions, through the exertions of the British navy; although its propriety was so obvious, and the execution, when entrusted to a British Admiral, so easy, that I do not apprehend the friends of Ministry would be eager to fasten upon it as the only considerable service performed by the immense and unconquerable fleet of England.

directed and so unhappily foiled by those, who are entrusted with the management of fleets and armies, so matchless in spirit, so admirable in discipline, so ardent in patriotism! How scornfully would the spirit of the immortal Chatham frown, could he but look down upon the petty contentions which we have too often witnessed, and by which we so grievously suffer;—upon the abortive schemes, the contradictory arrangements, the injudicious selection of points to attack, and the disastrous delays before any attack is made!—Could he, in short, see all our expeditions, perversely directed to any objects rather than those of upholding the interests, and maintaining the honour, of England; and in the same proportion destroying the resources, and baffling the projects, of the enemy!

Of neutral nations, unfortunately, there are but few; and those few our policy has by no means tended to conciliate. Situated as Great Britain is, it should seem to have been the main object of every one, occupying the place, if not claiming the character, of a statesman, to have spared no exertion which could tend to diminish the number of our enemies, and to increase that of our friends. Our modern Temples and Chathams appear to have acted

upon a system diametrically the reverse; and in the conduct pursued towards America, so far as documents yet made public enable us to judge, we have been equally deficient in liberality and in sagacity. I do not measure the effects, or appreciate the wisdom, of our Orders in Council, by a dry calculation of exports and imports.* I consider them as affecting our national character for prudence and for justice; I consider the light under which they cause us to appear to other nations, and particularly to that, which is most affected by their operation. That the measure must be odious to others, and, in many respects, extremely prejudicial to ourselves, cannot be for a moment doubted. The effects of it were too visible in the most serious embarrassments of commercial men,—in the decline of our manufactures, attended with afflicting commotions,—and in the increased price of many necessaries, as well as luxuries, of life. Nothing, therefore, could have justified it but stern, unbending necessity. Now

* If we view these orders merely as to the amount of exports and imports, it is important to ascertain, how much, subsequently to their date, is owing to *illicit traffic*, on our side of the water, and on the other; how much to the *increased price* of articles, which increase of price has been actually the consequence of these orders; and how much, also, to circumstances, which were not contemplated when they were issued,—the revolutionary state of Spain, and the renewed trade with her and her colonies.

it is perfectly clear, that the famous Berlin decree must have remained a mere dead letter, unless we had chosen to give it effect by the orders, which, in a fit of absurd resentment, were issued by this country.

And if it be true, that a proposition has been made by the American government, to repeal the embargo in our favour, provided we rescind our orders, and, on the other hand, to continue it in full force against the French, unless they repeal their offensive edicts, it will surely be difficult, if not impossible, for the Ministry to offer any satisfactory excuse for rejecting it. In fact, we have in this, as upon too many occasions, adopted the very measure, which our insidious and enterprising enemy had wished us to pursue. By his decree, he had exposed himself to the just ridicule of uttering an impotent menace, a childish rhodomontade. Blockade the English islands! As well might the English Cabinet propose to march to Paris! Buonaparté had, moreover, incurred the indignation of America herself, for the power which he assumed of interfering with the rights of Independent States, as well as for the annoyance which, feeble as his means were, he had given to her trade. And, so long as his decree continued, the spirit of America would have risen

more and more against him; while, if we had pursued an even and liberal policy, their attachment would have been drawn more firmly towards us. Instead of improving an opportunity so favourable for conciliating a most important and useful Ally, we at once undertook the justification of Buonaparté, by acting upon the principles which he had assumed. And, as our power of carrying the principle into effect was so much greater, we naturally drew upon ourselves so much a greater share of the public indignation in America. These ill effects, which are inseparable from the measure in question, will not be removed, I fear, even though it be proved that the amount of our exports and imports has not been diminished, in consequence of these unfortunate orders. The disgust we have caused to a nation, whose friendship we ought to conciliate, the triumph we have allowed to Buonaparté, by converting his futile menace into a most efficient measure against our own commerce; the encouragement given to smuggling, with all its train of fraudulent evasion and systematized perjury, all these sad consequences will, I suspect, occasion to the advisers of this measure a repentance much too late for the application of any speedy or effectual remedy.

If the facts that have been brought forward in the foregoing pages have been correctly stated, and the conclusions fairly deduced, it must follow, as the inevitable result, that our present Ministers are completely destitute of such qualities as are necessary to conduct the nation with credit or security, in designs to be undertaken against the enemy, in negotiations carried on with neutral powers, or in operations to be concerted with our allies. At a period of extended and perilous warfare, when the very next blow may be aimed at our own vitals, and the battle perhaps fought upon our own shores, it is evident, that a deficiency in the knowledge and skill, requisite for military affairs, is, at once, decisive of their unfitness for the duties of their departments. An acquaintance with the arts of peace, and a disposition to preserve inviolate the constitutional rights of the subject, even if they were found in high perfection, would not avail them in times like the present. But, even upon these points, I should fear that they cannot confidently urge any plea for continuing to occupy their high and responsible situations.

Neither the maxims, avowed or implied, when they came into power,—nor the principles,

by which their internal policy has been regulated, appear to afford any just ground for the confidence of Parliament, and of the nation. Upon these points, however, coming, as they do, so immediately within the observation, and affecting so directly the feelings and the interests, of all my fellow-subjects, I cannot conceive it necessary to enlarge. If Englishmen be not alive to the check which has been given to the constitutional right of petitioning in the memorable answer to the Corporation of London; if they do not feel alarmed at the measure of appointing commissioners, paid by the Crown, for the purpose of watching and controlling the conduct of gentlemen, who have heretofore gratuitously and honourably superintended the execution of the tax upon property, I cannot expect that any remonstrance from any individual will, upon such subjects, be heard with effect.

Yet upon a topic of so much importance it may still be worth while to arrest the attention of the reader. It must be fresh in the memory of every one who has in any degree attended to the origin and progress of the Income Tax, that Mr. Pitt, upon first proposing that measure, urged most feelingly, and most forcibly, that, by confiding the exe-

cution of his bill to the wisdom, loyalty, and integrity of intelligent, honourable, and independent men, no subject could be harassed by a frivolous and vexatious summons;—no man's honest dignity insulted by the arrogance of an hireling tax-gatherer. That an unforeseen and calamitous defalcation of income should not bring upon the unhappy sufferer the additional misery of galling and unfeeling animadversion; and that malignant and inquisitorial investigation should not complete the ruin of those resources, which the cruelty of fortune had in some degree spared.—These are evils, from which the original proposer of this tax had assured us we should be free.—But it may be urged that, under all former provisions and improvements, it still continued unproductive and inefficient. No! the author of the new regulations is fully aware that the wise arrangements of his predecessors had rendered this tax productive, not only beyond all sober calculation, but beyond even visionary expectation. But he seems resolved to act upon system; and having proposed one bill for committing the property of the clergy to the disposal of the bishops, he has introduced another for consigning the income of the laity to the discretion of a ministerial agent; with whom independent commissioners are not suffered to act upon

equal terms, and who must therefore either resign, or reluctantly consent to become a board for registering and enforcing his imperious mandates.

It is now important to inquire, what the remedy may be for such various existing evils? what the probable security against worse impending calamities? The most obvious answer, in the first place, is, Remove the obnoxious Ministers. A change in this instance may produce much good, and cannot in any way be detrimental. But then the question occurs, whom will you place in their stead? Would you appoint the old Administration? I must confess, I do not think so meanly of the talents and knowledge of my countrymen, as to think it would be difficult to point out those, who would manage the state better than it is now managed, without having recourse to the late Administration. Yet I must always think and speak with feelings of high respect for the only Ministers that, in my recollection, have shewn any zeal for temperate and salutary reform;—that displayed such sympathy with the miseries of a large portion of the human race, as to carry into effect the abolition of the slave trade;—that manifested an unequivocal spirit of policy and of tolerance towards our

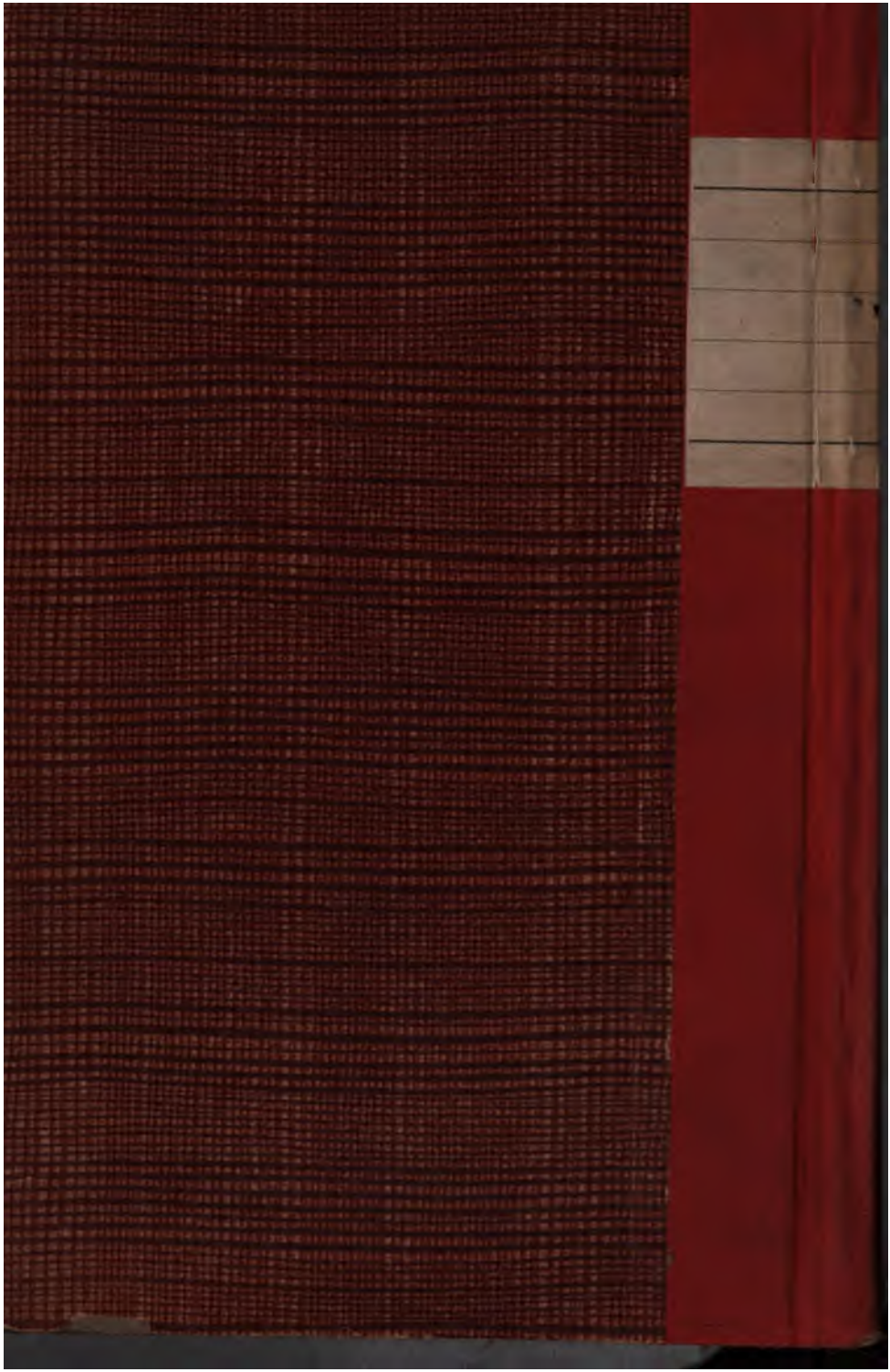
fellow-subjects in Ireland:—and that maintained the dignity of their own country, while they respected the claims of other nations, in the firm, but conciliatory, tone which they held both to Denmark and America. To such men as Lords Spencer and Grenville, Lords Moira and Grey, Lords Holland, Henry Petty, and Mr. Windham, I cannot but allow the highest praise for integrity and ability. Yet I am far from believing that they are the only men in the kingdom who deserve this praise. Give but due encouragement to public spirit and talent; let not aristocratical connexion, or Parliamentary influence, be the only qualification required for exercising an efficient or profitable office; you will not then discover a want of HONEST and WISE MEN, to wield the resources of the empire, even in this time of urgent danger.

One of the misfortunes attending the present state of the country, or rather, one of the causes of all our misfortunes, has been the practice of assigning public employments by favour rather than merit; by the secret expectation of support, rather than the public ground of acknowledged talent. If junior Lords of the Admiralty and Treasury, the Paymasters and Postmasters, the Under Secretaries of State, our Diplomatic Agents, and Officers upon

the Staff, not to mention Dignitaries of the Church;—if all these are to be selected, merely because they are the sons of this or that Peer, or the connections of this or that borough-monger, without any regard to their habits of business, or actual acquirements, it cannot but be that public affairs will go wrong, and that a door will be open both to unintentional and intentional mismanagement. So far from an unkind or an envious feeling towards the higher orders of the community, I have always conceived that in them every mark of virtue and talent deserves the warmest praise, and the most ample encouragement; because, from the circumstances of birth, education, and example, they have greater difficulties to encounter in resisting temptations, than such as fall to the lot of other men. But I cannot forget that our's is a mixed government, and that the Commons have their part in the theory of the Constitution, as well as the Sovereign and the Nobles. When I complain that the aristocracy have more than a due share of the management of the government, and of the influence and advantage resulting from it, I am only desirous of calling into action the true principles of our constitution, and of directing its real practice according to its undisputed theory. This, then, I conceive to be another and indispensable method of improving the condition of the country:—To

restore to the popular part of the three Estates its just weight in the equilibrium of government, by a more uncontrolled expression of the general will, in the election of Representatives, and by appointing men of honesty and ability, from that part of the community, in a fair competition with the aristocracy, to situations of trust in the conduct of public affairs.

That a change of system, as well as of men, is not only expedient, but even necessary to the salvation of the empire, appears, then, an indisputable truth; and particularly a change in the mode of appointing to public offices, in the direction of the military department, and in the administration of the public resources. But by what means is such a change to be effected? By those which are prescribed in the wholesome enactments of law, for ascertaining and redressing public grievances;—by petitions to Parliament, and to the Sovereign;—by the opinion of the people, firmly and respectfully declared, at lawful times and places of assembling, and addressed to those authorities, in whom the power of granting the prayer of such petitions is vested by our free constitution. It is the duty, and surely will be the inclination, of Parliament, to pay attention to the voice of their constituents, if that voice be distinct and

unanimous; nor will our Sovereign, whose interests are ever inseparable from those of his people, refuse to lend a gracious ear to their earnest and dutiful supplications, upon subjects essentially connected with the honour of his crown, and the security of his dominions.

Such are the impressions which the present alarming state of public affairs has produced upon my mind; such the reflections, which an ardent feeling for the general good has impelled me to offer to the serious and dispassionate attention of my countrymen. With no description of public men have I any intercourse or connection; and, most unquestionably, I can have no interested motive for the office now undertaken. If, indeed, I could thus exercise my pen for the dishonourable purpose of serving a private end, prudence would direct me to play the part of an advocate, instead of arraigning those, against whom I have felt it my duty to employ the language of crimination. Sincerely should I rejoice, if I could think myself mistaken; if, in the conduct of government, I could discover any marks of that indefatigable zeal and consummate ability in the public service, which the public welfare imperiously demands. But events have, unfortunately, so corresponded with the conclusions